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# LandWorks Interim Evaluation Report, June 2016

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**LandWorks Interim Evaluation Report:  
June 2016**



**Joyce Halliday, Tina Wilkinson and Julie Parsons**

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Brief context:

The prison population is continuing to increase, product both of the number of prison sentences and the length of the sentence (MOJ, 2013). Rates of re-offending are also continuing to rise (MOJ, 2014). Increasing efforts are therefore being made to reduce recidivism and facilitate community reintegration (Moore, 2012). Resettlement projects are thus receiving more attention, with the potential of land-based activities to break the cycle of re-offending and social exclusion, and facilitate community reintegration attracting interest. Importantly, however, there is limited evidence as to their efficacy (Elsey et al. 2014).

LandWorks was established in 2013. It is a re-settlement project that uses land-based skills training (landscaping, horticulture and food production) to help offenders and ex-offenders readjust to life outside prison. Importantly, it is also a *rural* re-settlement project and one moreover that focuses on the *transition* from prison to community (Wright, 2013). It is funded by a diversity of grant making bodies<sup>1</sup>. The largest is the Big Lottery Reaching Communities Fund, awarded in December 2014. This covers 60% of the total project costs for three years, the majority of which is revenue funding (contributing towards staff salaries, training materials, travel, evaluation and overheads). Initially, it operated as a self-contained project within The Dartington Hall Trust. In March 2016, however, it became an independent registered charity.

A critical understanding of how the project is evolving together with an evaluation of the outcomes for participants, their families and the local community is essential not only to identify how LandWorks ‘works’ and how it can be improved and developed but also what generic lessons can be learned. This evaluation, which seeks to address exactly these issues, is funded as part of the Big Lottery award. It extends until April 2018 and this first report is a formative exercise, designed to report progress, highlight emergent issues for the project and direct evaluative effort for future years.

## 1.2. Terms of evaluation:

The aims and objectives of the study were outlined by the Dartington Hall Trust (DHT) in their invitation to tender, that is to enable LandWorks and its sponsors to learn *what works* in order to improve the efficacy of the project and become an example of good practice. We interpreted this as requiring an understanding of *process* (why and how it works) and *impact* (who it works for, how it affects their lives) as well as the measurement of *outcomes* - enumerating the changes (expected or otherwise) that have occurred.

With limited availability of funds our proposal was based primarily on providing the core information required to meet the nine indicators specified in the Big Lottery outcome and monitoring framework. These cover changes in re-offending behaviour, employability and human capital (see Figure 1 below). At the same time, the significance of context, whether that is the inner or local context (including organisational structure and culture) or outer context (including the environment, national policy, and the regulatory framework) (see e.g.

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<sup>1</sup> Awards range from a few hundred pounds to over £300,000 and variously contribute towards the operation as a whole and to specific activities, such as mentoring.

Robert and Fulop, 2014) all suggest such indicators should be embedded within a larger evaluative framework. This would enable us to establish the degree to which our findings are context specific or transferable.

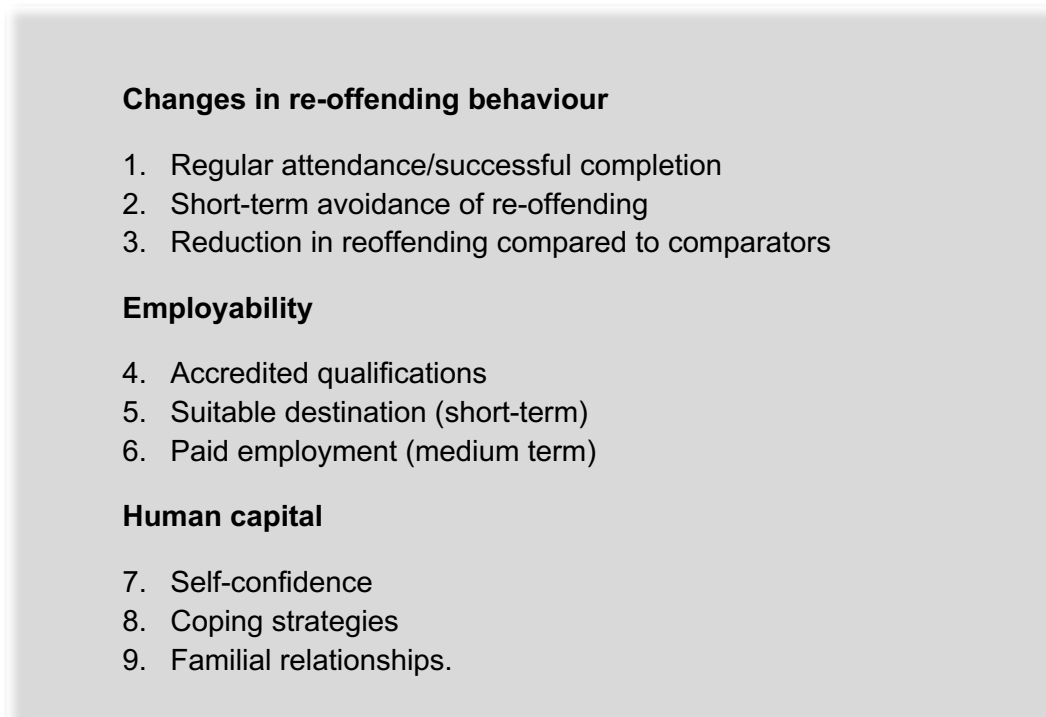


Figure 1: Big Lottery Outcome measures (2014)

### 1.3 Development since inception

It is important to note that LandWorks is a young and reflexive project; ideas and activities offered are constantly evolving and resources increasing. This evaluation is able to focus only on the period since June 2015. However, given the importance of context noted above, lessons are also drawn from its previous phase where practicable. In particular it is important to note the changes in national and local rehabilitative policy that have taken place since the project was inaugurated.

LandWorks was conceived primarily as a prison release project, drawing on the resettlement wing of the local prison to take men released on temporary licence (ROTLs). Changes at Ministerial level have affected the project's operational context. This has been most evident in the closure of many ROTL schemes nationally and the constraints placed on LandWorks relationship with the local prison, which is felt to have become more risk adverse in its approach (LW04). The Government's strategy, 'Transforming Rehabilitation', came into effect in February 2015 (Clinks, 2013) and should work in the opposite direction. This introduces *inter alia* the category of resettlement prisons which aim to provide more focused resettlement for local offenders approaching release (Clinks, 2016).

In the period since LandWorks' establishment changes to the offender management system have also seen the Probation Trust (the second source of trainees) disbanded and replaced by two organisations: the Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) (which manages lower risk clients) and the National Probation Service (which handles higher risk clients).

LandWorks trainees are drawn from the former (a cohort that is mostly in possession of a community order (i.e. they have not received a prison sentence) and largely consists of prolific offenders with complex needs (LW01). The CRC also manages everybody who comes out of prison on post sentence supervision. More specifically, LandWorks trainees are selected from those managed by the local Turnaround team, an integrated offender team, comprising police, probation, drugs treatment agencies and the community voluntary sector, which targets prolific offenders, aiming to break cycles of offending. Finally, changes to funding have also meant a reduction in the number of community-based diversionary activities suitable for this group at the same time as rehabilitation activity requirements have replaced supervision. In both instances potential trainees will have expressed an interest in 'doing something more with their life'<sup>2</sup>.

This report also describes other changes at the project level which depart from its original form, including an increase in available time on site (with trainees now potentially on site for five days a week rather than four), an increase in the numbers and range of activities and support services, together with an associated expansions in staffing and volunteer activity.

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<sup>2</sup> Additionally, LandWorks restricts access to the scheme if there are ongoing substance abuse problems or convictions for sexual offences.

## 2. Provisions for ongoing measuring and monitoring

### 2.1 Audit of available monitoring information

Most of this first year has been used to design monitoring and evaluation tools, which, in part, provide LandWorks with routine information to make sure the project is on track to attain its bid indicators and act as a guide to where development or improvement might be needed. The original project registration form has been revised to capture demographic and monitoring information, including family and housing status, and offending history (including type of sentence). The registration form is supplemented by trainee questionnaires at baseline, six months follow-up and exit.

Much time was spent establishing the type of information already being collected. A grid was prepared showing all the information required for both monitoring and evaluation purposes and any specific Lottery bid core indicators. Headings on the grid were cross-referenced with information already being collected through the registration form and on an existing Excel database to identify any omissions and to consider the usefulness of any additional information being collected.

This process identified several gaps in information collection in relation to: attendance; end date; completion; programme delivered; personal employment plans; destination information at various points (point of leaving, six months post LandWorks and 12 months post LandWorks; and, recall or reoffending information post LandWorks. More clarity was also needed in relation to 'regular attendance', 'programme delivered', and 'suitable work experience'.

The definition of 'regular attendance' is straightforward where trainees are attending the programme through a ROTL arrangement as trainees attend according to the agreement with the prison, i.e. five days per week at set times in the morning and afternoon. Interruptions to attendance tend to originate from the prison, i.e. 'lock-down'. For those trainees coming to the project through the community offender management route, there is far less clarity around regular attendance. These trainees are most likely to be living fairly chaotic lives and/or involved in a number of appointments in an attempt to stabilise their lives, i.e. the Job Centre or Housing Office, which disrupt attendance. LandWorks therefore acknowledges that some trainees require a more flexible approach than others and considers any number of hours completed as valuable, with *regular contact* if not attendance being deemed important.

This approach is supported by the Community Rehabilitation Company, who similarly recognised that '*more intermittent contact works well for some people*' (LW01). They did stress, however, that whatever the frequency agreed 'regularity' was important (i.e. attendance can be individually defined but it must be defined and adhered to). Such individually negotiated attendance is agreed on the Turnaround sentence plan (and thus potentially capable of incorporation into the monitoring form). Where community based trainees are claiming Jobseekers Allowance there is a requirement they attend 15 hours per week at LandWorks. Despite the challenges of capturing 'regular attendance' the Project Manager is recording the number of hours trainees attend on a daily log, which can be transferred to the database as described below.



'Programme delivered' is difficult to establish as the approach to programme delivery is again, flexible, according to what needs to be done on a day to day basis at the LandWorks' site and what trainees feel they would most like to be involved in. LandWorks explored the possibility of accreditation of their programme with Weston College but felt that this was not a meaningful way to approach things for the trainees and did not support the more flexible approach they favour. According to the LandWorks' Handbook (LandWorks, nd), the programme offers:

Skills in market gardening, construction, landscaping and carpentry are delivered at Quarry Field, alongside support for personal development – developing confidence, encouraging responsibility and building integral life and social skills. Art and creativity is encouraged.

Trainees can attend the project for up to twelve months.

On joining, LandWorks trainees complete a personal employment plan with the LandWorks' Manager but more information about this process is still required before we can report more fully.

'Suitable work experience' is identified as a destination option but we are still unclear as to what might be deemed as 'suitable'. LandWorks want more engagement with local employers to provide both work experience and employment opportunities but this is an area currently under development.

Reoffending rates of trainees are yet to be established, but one trainee who was deemed to be at risk by virtue of unsafe housing conditions was recalled to prison. Again there is support from some providers for a more nuanced approach to capturing change. The Community Rehabilitation Company, for example, appreciates the difficulties of effecting lasting change with their client group of prolific offenders and thus value reductions in volume and seriousness of offending (alongside desistance) as signs of progress (LW01). In contrast, the prison hierarchy was reported to be more interested in reoffending statistics (despite the small numbers involved) (LW16). This has implications for the choice of suitable measures.

## **2.2 Establishment of Excel database**

The LandWorks' Co-ordinator and Evaluation Team wanted to develop a comprehensive Excel database which would provide readily available monitoring and evaluation information, and which would track trainees' progress through the LandWorks programme and beyond. Another function was for the spreadsheet to act as a mechanism to 'flag up' reminders for milestone activities such as follow-up and exit questionnaire completion. The various fields as identified through the above audit were input to Excel under four main headings - registration, attendance, programme delivered, and programme completion.

Registration fields remained largely the same as the original database but additional columns (with categories) for family status and type of accommodation were added. In the attendance section, columns have been set up to show number of sessions offered and the actual number of sessions attended for each trainee. The intention is for attendance information to be extracted from the Project Manager's weekly log. The programme

delivered and programme completion sections provide an opportunity for LandWorks to populate the various fields with information, which will provide key information around employability and reoffending (core Big Lottery outcomes).

The programme delivered section requires data input around skills and qualifications gained on project and information around work/training placements. Personal employment plan information can also be inserted here. This section also provides the mechanism to flag up various baseline and follow-up points for each trainee in order that data collection is timely and keeps on track. In addition, periodic data collection points for The Outcomes Star (see 3.3 below) and evaluation interviews are also included.

In terms of programme completion, this section provides fields to input destination information around gaining paid employment and staying in paid employment at various follow-up points. Recall or reoffending dates can also be recorded here.

## **2.3 Proposals for further development**

The database has been available since February 2016 and is currently awaiting retrospective population of data by LandWorks. The aim is that the new version of the database will hold all the relevant information for trainees attending LandWorks since June 2015<sup>3</sup>. The evaluators appreciate the scale of the task but believe collecting the range of information routinely will be of real value to the project moving into the future. Some areas such as work situation once left LandWorks and reoffending/recall could prove particularly challenging. A lot will depend here on the relationship that trainees have with LandWorks once they have left and the partnership between LandWorks and the Community Rehabilitation Company.

The evaluators are also exploring the possibility of receiving anonymised reports from the Offender Assessment System (OASys), which could provide valuable insight around destination information. This standardised risk assessment tool is used *inter alia* by both the probation and prison services to: assess how likely an offender is to re-offend; assess their risk of serious harm identify; classify their offending-related needs; inform the development of a supervision or sentence plan to manage their risk of harm and measure change during the period of supervision/sentence (<http://www.westmerciapro probation.org.uk>). It should include timescales for that work and be the subject of periodic review.

A member of the local Turnaround team suggested several ways in which this process could generate information for the evaluation. First, we could compare trainees' initial OASys scores (embedding their problems and needs) with their OASys scores on completion; this would give a measure of individual progression. Second, we could compare the 2 year offender group reconviction score for the LandWorks cohort with the reconviction scores for the remainder of the prolific offenders (although figures generated are probabilities rather

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<sup>3</sup> 13 trainees have been on the programme since the start of the evaluation in June 2015, including those who were already in place at the start of the evaluation. These have all been male and are roughly equally divided between ROTL's (7) and those from the community (6). They range in age from 19-57 (mean 36 years). With completion of the database we should be able to describe their pathways through the project, including destinations.

than actualities). Third, (with trainees' consent) we could look at the content of their plan, which would enable us to see what the Case Manager thought they had achieved and the degree to which LandWorks might have helped by, for example, introducing them to pro-social people, enabling them to take part in restorative justice or becoming become more empathetic. Similar statistics should be available from the prison service and discussions as to their availability should be a priority for Year 2 alongside mobilising data from Turnaround.

Another area of challenge is in identifying a comparator group to further understand the impact of LandWorks on employment and reoffending rates amongst their trainees. This is theoretically possible via, for example OASys (see above) but the small numbers and the range of offender characteristics suggest it is unlikely to be meaningful statistically.

It should also be noted that stakeholder interviews (see section 4 below) *are* an important source of credible information and represent alternative ways of capturing change other than by interrogating small numbers:.

*"Yes, I think the prison doesn't appreciate the benefits but individuals that know the individuals, myself and my colleagues do, it's too big an organisation for them to kind of acknowledge what's going on." (LW16)*

## 3. Trainee Interviews

### 3.1 Questionnaire design

Questionnaires were already in use from previous evaluation work. They were designed to capture trainees' self-esteem, well-being and readiness for work together with their perceptions of the effectiveness of the different elements of the LandWorks' training programme/overall experience. Some time was spent in consideration of how these might be changed, but overall, the questionnaires were working well with the trainees and the LandWorks' Co-ordinator wasn't experiencing too many difficulties in their administration. The questionnaires incorporated some questions from the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale, which the Project Co-ordinator did not feel was well understood by trainees on completion. This contributed in part to a discussion of finding a different way of measuring change across time, including consideration of The Outcomes Star as discussed below. In the event, however, the questionnaires remained the same until such time as an alternative tool was implemented.

The analysis draws on 5 initial questionnaires and two exit questionnaires administered by the evaluation team and the LandWorks Co-ordinator. Two of the trainees had joined LandWorks in December 2015, another in January 2016, while two others had been with the project since July and August 2015 respectively. The two exit interviews relate to one trainee who was released in April and another who was waiting to move to a Category D prison, which would happen with very little notice.

### 3.2 Emergent Themes

The questionnaire transcripts have been analysed by team members and classified under three headings: the journey towards the LandWorks opportunity; being at LandWorks; and, moving into the future.

#### 3.2.1 The journey towards the LandWorks opportunity

Trainees who joined LandWorks through the ROTL route were from the resettlement wing of the prison. Those in the resettlement wing have 'earned' extra privileges, *"I guess really if you've been a good boy, kept your nose clean and everything and you get the option to go onto... the resettlement wing..."* (T02). Various internal and external 'work' opportunities were available, but LandWorks came through as a very different (and preferred option) for the trainees:

*"...because I've been at (bike shop) for 16 months in the prison, and the experiences I've gained out here in three months is more to me... but different, different things that you do out here is like for everyday life." (T04b)*

*"A job in the prison isn't really like a job in the real world, what we do in a day in the real world you'd probably take a week in... a lot slower place because of all the protocol and everything really." (T02)*

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The trainees we spoke with had gained most of their knowledge about LandWorks from other trainees and 'word of mouth' was the main source of information, *"I was quite friendly*

*with one of the lads in the prison called [name of former trainee] who was here at this project and he used to come back telling me all about it” (T02). Very limited information was available from the prison to inform trainees’ decisions to try LandWorks, “at the start I think it would have been a bit more useful for the prison to actually tell you, you know, tell you what it exactly is all about” (T01b).*

Reasons for deciding to come to LandWorks fell into two categories with some trainees being very clear that initially it was about getting out of prison for five days a week, “*just get out of jail, no concerns*” (T05). For others it was part of a broader plan to move into the future:

*“...I didn’t want to go to the other projects they had... and I also wanted to have... help basically in [planning into the future]... and this was the only place that actually gives you that help...”. (T01)*

*“Enhanced is a privilege, own clothing and extra visits. Then get my ROTL. You might see it as nothing but it’s a big achievement, big stepping stone to come out and work”. (T04)*

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The prison system had presented a setback for one trainee whose start date on the project had been postponed, “*new prison service instruction came in so they gated everybody, I had to wait from March then until the beginning of August*” (T02).

### **3.2.2 Being at LandWorks**

When speaking about their time at LandWorks the trainees mostly spoke about the ethos of the project, skills they’d developed, both vocational and personal, and their hopes and plans for the future.

#### **a. Project ethos and environment**

Animated accounts of ethos and environment of the project were presented by the trainees in relation to the non-judgemental environment, feeling like part of a family, and feeling welcomed/at ease:

*“I’d done a little, well, quite a bit of time behind the door, so actually leaving the prison was a bit of a nervous moment... but I was quite settled from the get go... no one’s judging, if you know what I mean, which put me at ease straight away... you didn’t have to wait for that to happen, it was just there from the beginning”. (T01)*

*“The other think I like about it as well is nobody judges you for your crime, they take you by face value...” (T02)*

One trainee talking of another: “*he said it was like sitting there with a big family and he really liked it*”. (T02)

*...it’s just a nice environment, good people, people who care for you... support you and care for you”. (T04b)*

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All the trainees valued the flexible approach offered for their engagement with the project and the blend of work and social opportunities they could engage with, described as a reflexive environment at 4.2.1(b) below:

*“...well, I went to make a coffee table the other day, obviously [name of staff member], he knows how to make coffee tables and that. And I get things in my head and I have to do them certain ways, and that. And he said, “Well, you can do it like this,” even though I still wanted to do it my way, he said, “All right, you can crack on then.” And he still helped me to do it the way I chose to do, even though it probably wasn’t the right way to do it”. (P01)*

*“My impression of the place is it’s not all about the work because you’re not like work, work, work, work, work, work, work, you can do as much or as little as you want, from what I see from different lads there I’ve always felt that I can do as much or as little, if I want to stop and have a chat with [staff members] or anybody really about, I don’t know, things that have been happening in my life or whatever and that, that’s never an issue or a problem, I’m never forced to do anything that I don’t want to do”. (T02)*

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The element of choice, however, was tempered with the idea of wider expectations around engagement, *“if you prefer doing one thing you do get to do it a bit more... but you do have to try everything” (T01).*

Disbelief seemed to thread through the trainees’ accounts of their engagement with people who attended the project in one role or another:

*“...one of the most different things that I’ve seen and unexpected is the interaction with the public, different, different people that have come out here”. (T04)*

*“...people like yourself and people from the outside coming in and you’re meeting people from all different walks of life and everything which is nice”. (T02)*

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For the trainees, not being judged, and being around different kinds of people who responded positively to them, was in complete contrast to prison where *“people take kindness as weakness... so then coming back out here everybody’s really kind and nice to you out here and that and it’s genuine.... I’m not guarded out here, I can be open here, I can speak freely, I can be open minded, I can put my views and points across” (T02).* This shift from feeling institutionalised in prison to regaining a sense of self was significant for another, *“...it’s quite nice to be in a place where you can actually trust people, and well be yourself... I’ve got myself back a little bit...” (T01b).*

In fact, in describing their time at LandWorks, it at times felt like the trainees were speaking about some kind of utopia:

*“I’m pretty spoiled at the minute, I don’t think I’d get it any easier than what I’ve got here [laughs]. I’m out working five days a week, I’m mixing with nice people, I’m mixing with males, females, everybody from different walks of life,*

*everybody that comes along is really nice and people bring cakes along and it's like yah, happy days". (T02)*

*"I'm telling you, these people I've never known... these people, so much respect for each other, helping... I never knew that a place goes on like this". (T04b)*

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## **b. Skills development**

Trainees overwhelmingly described the project in terms of its ethos and environment, sometimes the skills and work side of the project seemed almost secondary:

*...they do lovely meals... they're non-judgemental and they're a nice crowd, at least out here you can actually start to connect with who you were and who you're going to be... and plus, get to do a bit of work as well which is not a bad thing". (T01)*

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Where skills were mentioned, trainees valued the opportunity to re-engage with previous work skills, particularly in terms of rebuilding confidence:

*"...basically it's helped me return back to the skills I had before... the other thing is you tend to forget things... because you haven't done things for a while... because you haven't done anything for a while you tend to just forget about these things... remembering the stuff is handy because you'll remember it before you're actually released". (T01)*

*[Project Staff Member] has given be a free hand with the building at the moment, he's asking my opinion and that again which is nice...". (T02)*

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Similar to the unique social interaction opportunities, trainees were also introduced to skills and activities that they had not previously experienced and these had made an impression on them:

*"Quite strange. Some of the stuff they do is quite weird". (T03)*

*"...what I see happen out here I've never seen nothing like this, nothing like this. I still learn from it, I learn from it, even cooking with you [LandWorks Staff Member] in the kitchen...". (T04b)*

---

One trainee enjoyed the creative side of some of the activities, "you have an idea, you can create it from scratch, the process, the whole thing, it's an experience and half" (T04). Being creative and trying new things helped trainees to discover skills which they thought would be useful into the future. For one trainee engaging with other trainees on the project and offering support to them had led him to think, "I could be quite good at doing something like this, like teaching people" (T02). For another, woodwork had presented an idea for additional work alongside his main employment, "they've got a lathe in there where they can turn out quite a lot of wooden plates and different things like that. I'd basically do a little bit of a side line... (T01).

Flexibility of the LandWorks' approach was a prevalent theme but a few trainees commented that they thought it would be of value to receive some sort of formal acknowledgement of attending LandWorks:

*"Yeah, I think it would be good to have some sort of training as well. But there's... simple things like getting a CSCS [Construction Skills Certification Scheme] card". (T01b)*

*...when they say they're giving a certificate in prison, this is where you should get a certificate from". (T04b).*

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Another interesting aspect of being at LandWorks was its unexpected impact on trainees' attitudes and expectations:

*"...one of the most things I like is this trustworthy part of it [LandWorks]... it's made me view life all different, a different, different way I look at life since I've been here, a different way..." (T04)*

*"I was quite judgemental before... it [LandWorks] sort of taught me not to jump to conclusions about people". (T01b)*

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An overall feeling about being at LandWorks was presented by a trainee who was about to leave the project on release from prison, *"the experience is a lot better than what I expected, definitely"* (T01b).

### **c. Moving into the future**

Being at LandWorks had contributed to preparation for release and 'usual' life:

*"And the thing the project's done for me is let me know that basically things aren't necessarily going to be the same. And it's given me opportunity to basically actually think about being release... so at least my head's back in it before I'm released". (T01)*

*"...so I thought it might be quite nice to get into a normal working week again so when I'm released it would integrate me a bit easier". (T02)*

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LandWorks also offered a chance to reconnect with self, *"...you're just a number in prison, you lose your self-respect, you lose your dignity, you lose everything really... [LandWorks] gives you it all back I think and probably a bit more"* (T02). Trainees spoke of other enablers for starting again on release, including reconnecting with family and personal relationships.

All the trainees appeared to have family or friendship ties that they had maintained through their sentences:

*"Telephone calls and visits. I stay in touch with my parents, sister, uncle and best friend". (T05)*



*"Told mum about it [LandWorks]... three sisters, two brothers". (T03)*

*"...kids and my partner, happy I'm here [LandWorks]". (T04)*

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Some trainees spoke of family and personal relationships that had potentially been fractured along the way, "[my daughter] I've not had a lot of contact with her in the last five years", and the Relate counsellor had been very useful in providing an opportunity to work through these issues, "I tried a couple of different things with her [the counsellor] which I don't really think worked out... but other parts have been really good" (T02). Resistance to speaking with a counsellor was expressed, "I think I was a bit dubious about that to start with... because when I found out she was a Relate counsellor..." (T02). For one trainee, sessions with the counsellor had provided an opportunity to resolve concerns about his relationship with his partner, "but talking through it with the counsellor, basically I've overcome that worry of basically thinking I'm always going to be in her debt" (T01). Engagement with the counsellor had also equipped him with a strategy for dealing with a potentially difficult situation, which meant he couldn't return to his previous home:

*"And she [the counsellor] helped me come to realise that I was probably looking at it in the wrong way, I'm being told I can't go back there, I can take the power for myself and make the choice to move somewhere else...". (T01)*

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The importance of housing stability on release was also articulated by another trainee, "I'm concerned about accommodation anyway, but I'm not going to a hostel" (T03).

Of concern for one trainee was their relationship with a probation officer on release, "you worry about the relationship you're going to have to build with probation officer, obviously these people can send you back to prison" (T01). LandWorks play an important role in ameliorating some of this concern through their partnership work with the Community Rehabilitation Company through inviting their staff to visit the project:

*"...they do have probation officers that do come out to the project, so you get to meet them. Although they're not your probation officer you get to see what they are like as people... so it has eased my mind a little bit to what to expect". (T01)*

*"She's [probation officer] actually coming out here for dinner I think in two weeks' time, coming out for lunch and that to see what's going on around the project". (T02)*

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The juxtaposition between life at LandWorks and 'usual' life was also highlighted as a possible concern:

*"Well the unity, the unity at LandWorks it's a big thing... to see a group of people live like how LandWorks people amongst one another, you've got no backstabbing, each one looking for each other, helping them. That doesn't really happen out there... it doesn't happen out there at all..." (P04b)*

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A reduction in reoffending is of course a key outcome indicator for LandWorks and a picture of this will only be gained through longitudinal tracking of trainees following their time on

LandWorks and after release. Narratives of the trainees in this analysis spoke about making a decision to not reoffend or their prison sentence being the consequence of a one off action rather than a history of criminal behaviour:

*"...I think as soon as you arrive at the prison you know whether you want to change or not to change, whether you want to end up here again or you don't... I'm not going to put myself in this situation again, definitely not". (T01)*

*"I've done a crime so I deserve to be in prison for it but I'm not a criminally minded person you know". (T02)*

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Staying engaged with LandWorks was identified as a desire for the trainees:

*"...because it's quite a big part of my life for about six, seven months and you get to know people really so... so yeah, I'd definitely be keen to come back". (T01)*

*"I've built some really, really good relationships with the people here..." (T02)*

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It's obviously not possible to gauge how far a positive and optimistic attitude will contribute to successful reintegration into 'usual' life for the trainees but if this is a prerequisite, the trainees appeared to have it in abundance:

*"...most of the worries I did have, have already been sorted. That's the good thing basically with coming out here, you can get everything sorted before that release date. So really you've only got to look forward to it". (T01)*

*"There's loads to look forward to... I'm looking forward to getting into a relationship again... I'll look forward to that and seeing my children, spending time with them... it's all going to be good, I know it is, I'm so confident it's going to be good". (T02)*

*"Every time I remember LandWorks... what I've done at LandWorks is going to become part of my daily life... what I'm doing at LandWorks will get me back into work. This is resettlement". (T04)*

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### **3.3 Critique/Areas for development**

This section draws from the trainees' perspectives and also from the observations and experiences of the evaluation team since starting the evaluation work in June.

LandWorks should continue to foster the relationship with the prison, particularly in terms of providing potential trainees housed in the rehabilitation block with information about LandWorks. Trainees suggested there was a paucity of information available, although one trainee suggested he had initiated a conversation with an existing prison officer around more information being available including photographs of the site and the work that is taking place.

There is no doubt from the trainees we spoke with that being at LandWorks has changed them in one way or another and impacted on their thoughts and feelings about 'moving on'. An observation, however, is that more information is needed around how lasting these thoughts and feelings are once trainees return to 'usual' life. 'Usual' life for many will not be comparable to life at LandWorks and the evaluation team would like to investigate this onward pathway further. The wealth of experiences around good food, a flexible daily routine and a completely different environment appear to have benefited the trainees at the point of interview, but what is of real interest is how these 'hold up' once back in their usual day to day lives, which might not be described as quite the 'utopia' LandWorks has been described as. This longitudinal perspective will hopefully be possible via continuing evaluative contact after attendance at the project has finished. There is a similar need to capture the experiences of people who go '*off the radar*' (LW02

Of particular note, is the flexibility of learning and achieving at LandWorks which might not be replicable in an everyday workplace with fixed routines and requirements. We would also suggest that, despite well-founded reservations (see 4.2.5), LandWorks continues to explore the possibility of formalising the LandWorks 'programme' in an accredited way or seeks to identify an existing qualification, which might be attainable through the work undertaken by trainees at LandWorks. This fits in with the notion of 'graduating' from the programme and would reinforce the sense of value that trainees attach to their time with the project.

While some resistance to 'opening up' to the counsellor was expressed, it was obvious that engagement with this aspect of LandWorks had helped in terms of planning and building resilience as the trainees planned for release. We would recommend that ongoing funding is a priority for the availability of counselling services.

Through attendance at LandWorks and conversations with LandWorks staff it appeared that much time was spent offering both practical and emotional support to achieve change in trainees' personal and daily lives, particularly those who attended through the Community Rehabilitation Company. In response to this, use of The Outcomes Star was explored to supplement the questionnaires. The Outcomes Star is a tool designed to support and measure change when working with people (more information can be found here <http://www.outcomesstar.org.uk/about-the-outcomes-star/>). There are different versions of the Star designed according to the people engaged with or type of service delivered. It is a widely respected and used tool and is proven to be valid and reliable. Investigation of the various stars identified that a Work Star was available. The Work Star focuses on seven core areas: 1) job specific skills; 2) aspiration and motivation; 3) job search skills; 4) stability; 5) basic skills; 6) social skills for work; and, 7) challenges. This Star offered an opportunity to support people both in their journey towards work and to address other issues impacting on stability. The Star also offers a simple system of scoring to identify individuals' progress, and is both useful for monitoring purposes and more in-depth analysis of how a service or intervention is working. At the time it was also identified that a Criminal Justice Star was in development but wouldn't be available until May 2016.

Both the LandWorks and evaluation teams agreed that embedding the Star as part of the LandWorks offer would be a useful addition. As such, the LandWorks Co-ordinator and one evaluator attended training in London in October 2015. Following completion of the training, LandWorks felt that they wanted to wait until the Criminal Justice Star was available as this would be a better fit for their project. The latest update is that this star will be published in

June 2016. There is a real need for to be able to measure change longitudinally and cumulatively so if it is decided that The Outcomes Star will not be implemented, consistent administration of the wellbeing scale within the questionnaires will need to be embedded into practice. In fact, the routine collection of information is a key recommendation moving into the future,

Prior to June 2015, the LandWorks' Co-ordinator had been completing the questionnaires around the same time as the registration form, but the evaluators wanted to be involved in carrying out this task to perhaps offer an opportunity for a more objective response to questions. In the event, however, for reasons of timing and other work pressures, the questionnaires were completed by two members of the evaluation team and the LandWorks' Co-ordinator. Questionnaire completion was also tackled differently by the three interviewers with some following a questionnaire completion approach (so fairly short, closed responses) while others completed the questionnaire as though in an interview situation. Not all information is complete; scores are not available for all trainees in relation to the mental wellbeing questions drawn from the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale. As suggested above, this will be of even more importance if The Outcomes Star is not utilised. The 'flags' on the database should provide for a more efficient process in completing questionnaires into the future and should contribute to a more consistent approach.

## 4. Stakeholder Interviews

### 4.1 Interviews conducted

The analysis draws on 20 interviews conducted by the evaluation team, including 13 conducted by a team member as part of a Sociology of Health and Illness Foundation (SHI) Mildred Blaxter post-doctoral research fellowship. This covers a total of 18 individuals (i.e. two individuals were interviewed twice). The roles covered (with some individuals operating in several capacities) include: representatives of the local prison service; police service; and community rehabilitation service; (including two members of Turnaround, the local integrated offender team – see 1.3 above), four members of the project 'staff'<sup>4</sup> (including the administrator, artist in residence (funded by Arts Council three days a week), the woodwork instructor and a counsellor); three members of the Advisory Board (including the Chair and an employee of Dartington Hall Trust); the three Trustees of the new CIO (two of whom were also interviewed in their capacity as Advisory Board Members); a local employer (who has employed graduates from LandWorks); an employee of a Dartington based learning community (which provides meals for the trainees); two ambassadors; two volunteers; and a supporter.

Both sources used a semi-structured interview schedule. For the evaluation-specific interviews, this allowed respondents to reflect upon their engagement with the project, its effectiveness, its achievements (including its impact upon the trainees and their organisation), the challenges faced, and any changes they would like to see. The SHI interviews focused more specifically on the role of food within the project, particularly the significance attaching to cooking and eating together.

### 4.2 Emergent themes

The interview transcripts have been analysed by team members and classified under six major heads: ethos; resources; governance; activities; outcomes for trainees, outcomes for the community and ongoing challenges. It should be borne in mind that these themes reflect the considered responses of the interviewees and are time and context-specific. They do not cover all aspects of the project's operations. In subsequent years interviews will be entered onto NVivo, alongside other sources of project information (such as project documentation and blogs) to facilitate ongoing data classification, analysis over time and triangulation.

#### 4.2.1 Project ethos

Reference was made to a number of inter-related features that suggested LandWorks operates almost in locus parentis, offering a family-style environment where trust can be developed, skills fostered, actions questioned and emotional and practical support offered:

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<sup>4</sup> This term is used loosely in that the project only employs three members of staff directly, others are self-employed, funded by external grants or employed on a sessional basis to deliver a particular service.

*"it's based on close personal relationships and trust and understanding and good communication." (LW04)*

*"it's kind of a, sort of, re-parenting process, it's sort of...building up trust." (LW05)*

*"we listen to people and we kind of respond and we've got a few resources that we've bring to bear but we do what we can to help and the fact that we're doing what we can to help I think is what- what resonates with people."(LW09)*

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Three particular features stood out.

a. An inclusive environment

First, LandWorks was seen to be holistic and inclusive. Interviewees talked about an ability to see the whole person and the way it was *"an inclusive .. environment in all aspects"* (LW02), including the way that interventions were *"not overt so no prisoner feels done to"* (LW14). Importantly, this personal *"acceptance of who you are, irrespective of some bad choices that you might have made"* (LW05) was seen to be the first step in giving purpose, helping develop skills, enabling connections to other people and developing positive relationships that worked both ways.

b. A reflexive environment

Second, LandWorks was seen to have adopted a reflexive, adaptable and non-formulaic model, moderating both approach and activities offered in response to circumstances and individual need. In part this was seen to be product of its relative infancy: *"because it's very young and because it's evolved very quickly it's constantly changing, the interface"* (LW15).

Size was seen to be an important element of this ability to flex as were the attributes of the Project manager:

*"I think the role changes it with every individual, I think because you do have to adapt which is the beauty - I think that's probably what I like most about LandWorks, because it's small, you know, we can adapt to the individual." (LW03)*

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*"What I think [Project Manager] manages to do is to be very flexible within a clear structure which is really easy to say, not that much more difficult to write, and loads of people would say well I do that but very few do, very few of us manage to be flexible but actually allow real clarity for everybody around them but actually what the direction is and what the purpose is." (LW06)*

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It was also seen to be an approach that helped inculcate the acceptance of personal responsibility for change:

*“helping people build their lives again and it's not about somebody telling you what to do or following a formula, it's actually every guy who comes here has to work out for themselves how they're going to get stuff out of the project and they've got to work at it.” (LW09)*

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Some, however, contrasted the advantages of flexibility with an apparent absence of structures (LW15).

#### c. Ownership and engagement:

Some of those interviewed had been involved in the early conceptualisation and operationalisation of the project and this length of involvement and ability to shape and influence had led to strong feelings of ownership (LW01, LW04, LW06). More widely, trainees, visitors and ‘the 250 staff’ on the Dartington estate were all seen as feeling *“ownership in a positive way”* (LW06) and it was felt to be a place for family to come, offering *“core values and stability”* (LW15).

*“People are very proud of the project, I feel very proud of the project” (LW13)*

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This was fostered by concrete reminders of involvement, such as walls and workshops built, gardens and sculptures created. One example was the development of the cob wall timeline, where a variety of stakeholders including trainees, students and volunteers were invited to contribute a tile incorporating their experience:

*“it's actually more what's going to go on the surface of the wall which will then, I think, give people ownership of what's going on.... establishing ... what it means as a project to them” (LW02).*

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Size was an important contributory factor (with perhaps 5-6 ROTLs at the most at any one time). It follows that outcomes are not readily measured in numbers and that this will not be a *statistically* significant project. It also suggests it will not be easy to promulgate as responses are not standardised.

## **4.2.2 Resources**

### a. Staffing

There is a growing staff complement (both directly and indirectly employed), who bring a range of professional skills to the project, embracing management, administration, building and practical/craft skills, gardening, art and therapeutic relations. Recruitment has sometimes been by word of mouth or personal approach, ensuring a strong sense of commitment to the project and shared vision. A meeting is held each morning, encouraging

a team dynamic and enabling staff to bring any concerns to the table and seek advice as well as discussing the plans for the day.

This is reinforced by formal documentation, with a project handbook outlining the projects aims and milestones, organisation, funding sources, together with opportunities for engagement and ground rules for the various stakeholders, including trainees, staff and volunteers. This is subject to regular revision, again reflecting the gradual evolution of the project and the nature of LandWorks as a learning organisation.

As with the pilot evaluation, the Project Manager was variously described as a project champion, personally impressive, inspirational, intuitive, committed and enthusiastic. He was also considered to be good at picking people, whether staff or trainees.

*“you don’t hear anything but good about what [Project Manager] is doing here”(LW11)*

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This commitment was allied to a strong sense of ownership and personal direction, to the extent that one respondent suggested: *“Things have happened because he’s wanted them to happen and if he doesn’t want them to happen they don’t ... happen”*. This has led to a recognised danger of over-reliance (LW12).

*“[We] need to build a structure around [Project Manager] that in the first instance means that he can go on holiday or take a day off.” (LW07)*

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#### b. Experience allied to project

The project has been particularly adept at getting ‘good people’ on-board and recruiting a range of different skill sets. The Project Manager and a number of Advisory Board members have been particularly important in not only in establishing local reputation and galvanising support of different kinds (including financial) but also in using national links to effect. This ‘elite network’ is partly the product of place, not only location on the Dartington Hall estate but also location within an affluent rural area, a residential location favoured by people with significant professional credentials.

These networks have been critical in furnishing supporters, ambassadors and now trustees (LW11, LW12). Together they bring access to capital (including links to funding organisations), influence, expertise and professional experience (including advertising, marketing, experience of the criminal justice system and the third sector (including charities focusing on substance abuse and support in crisis)), donations in kind and practical support.

Some cannot be easily reproduced elsewhere. For example, drawing on three Advisory Board members alone, the project has links to the Prime Minister, Secretary of State for Justice, the Minister for the Cabinet Office, the outgoing Inspector of Prisons (who has been a frequent visitor to LandWorks) and the Chief Executive of NOMS.



*“And I’ve written to Gove over the weekend and he will read the letter and respond. My contacts are strong enough that this won’t just go into the pile.” (LW07)*

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These links may only be used sparingly when there is genuine need but they can be used to good effect.

There is also an element of the ‘local worthy cause’ with supporters using pre-existing friendship networks to introduce others, issue targeted invitations and even proffer a topic of after-dinner conversation.

*“I’ve enjoyed the sort of community aspect you know ...what I really like is so many of my friends are involved here” (LW13)*

*“I think a lot of them are probably just genuinely very nice people who’ve found a little very local project which I think is where LandWorks scores very heavily.” (LW03)*

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Critically, however, the continued ability to tap into such networks relies on project reputation and effectiveness.

LandWorks offers value in turn to ambassadors, supporters, volunteers who feel they are contributing to a worthwhile project, giving something back and putting their own life in perspective. For some there is:

*“a sort of feel good I suppose, about being part of a project that has got a future.” (LW09)*

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Some, however, voiced concerns that their engagement felt constrained, that they were not always sure what was happening, were uncertain as to their role and unduly reliant on their own initiative or unaware of how individuals progressed.

*“So I’m really engaged intellectually with it but I don’t think I’m really engaged with what happens on the ground” (LW15).*

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### c. Partnership working

LandWorks has a number of important partners, with the local prison, the community rehabilitation company and Plymouth University being key. The two former both help identify trainees for LandWorks, conduct risk assessments and monitor progress, Both expect the project to adhere to certain conventions, including safeguarding and the maintenance of open communication.

*“If there are any problems we would expect to be involved – and [Project Manager] is very good at that”. (LW01)*

*“[LandWorks]made it absolutely plain that if [the project manager] had any doubts about anyone, if he thought that the liberal environment was being abused in any way, that we would communicate our fears and any intelligence we had with the prison immediately (LW04)”*

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The two latter act as advocates (originating and providing endorsements for bids) with the University providing students for work experience. Over 1000 people are now signed up to support LandWorks, with open days typically attracting 150 people, all serve to make the project more resilient.

#### **4.2.3 Organisation and governance**

##### **a. The changing role of Dartington Hall Trust**

The first year of the evaluation coincided with LandWorks obtaining independent charitable status (see 4.2.3b below). The establishment of the project under the aegis of the Dartington Hall Trust (DHT) has been debated but was strategic from the outset. The project fitted well with the values and strategy of the Trust and particularly the work of the Social Justice Programme, where it found another strong and influential champion, with an interest in prolific offenders, strategic links to the criminal justice system and knowledge of the business planning process.

*“certainly in the early days Dartington's name opened doors” (LW06).*

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Its inclusion on the Dartington website aided visibility and synergy and many of the staff also felt connected to the project.

*“So I think we collectively gave them a place to think and put plan, we gave [Project Manager] a structure.” (LW06)*

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In addition to a well-placed and well-informed champion, this included access to “a lot of staff time”. This ranged from the Trust’s Property department (helping locate a site (which is visible and enables people to stop and buy) to development time, including support for bid-writing, fund raising and the development of health and safety resources. Dartington was also responsible for a degree of project formalisation, for example, the establishment of the Advisory Board (LW07) and protocols for its operation. It also resulted (LW06) in a subsidised rent, a subsidised central services charge and support from HR, (transferred now, in terms of emotional intelligence, with the business partner becoming a volunteer). A nominal £25,000 was put on this input when LandWorks began the process of separation from DHT, “which completely underestimated it, in fact that was the financial thing, we have never accounted for the time of people other than once it got going I did make a charge for my time and I come as a package with my PA so there was a charge in relation to that” (LW06).

In contrast, some connected with the project came to feel that it was wrongly badged as a DHT project, that the size of the overheads were disproportionate (LW07) and that

Dartington's size and reputation (both positive and negative) was inimical to drawing down funds from external agencies, attracting donations or mobilising community support.

*"the view is that we would find it better to build our community support both financially and practically if we are seen to be quite distant from Dartington because there are some people that want to support this project but don't want to feel that their money or their effort is somehow going into the larger sort of Dartington exercise." (LW04)*

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#### b. Registered charity status

LandWorks is now in the process of completing the transition to a stand-alone project, becoming a registered charity on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2016. The Advisory Board, which met quarterly, has been wound up and replaced by three local Trustees who will adopt a strategic role. They will be supported by a larger number of advisors and ambassadors, together incorporating the range of expertise needed, including finance, housing, employment, criminal justice, knowledge of government, organisation and charities, IT, PR, website design and legal and accounting services. (LW04, LW06, LW07). It is also hoped that the outgoing Chief Inspector of Prisons will be *"either an advisor or an ambassador and that's what we're looking for"* (LW07). Building on the existing project documentation there is *"expected to be a Trustee's handbook and there'll be an Advisor's handbook and an Ambassador's handbook. Very simple"* (LW07).

The partnership with Dartington also continues, with Dartington now seeing itself more as an enabler and LandWorks can potentially be part of the Dartington Collaborative Network, advertised as a 'can-do network'.

*"why it'll work better being apart from Dartington is that we can expect to get all of these skills for nothing because people want to help." (LW07)*

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Consideration has been given as to whether it was a model that could be franchised but the feeling now seems to be is that its strength is in being a local rather than potentially national charity. It should nevertheless act as *"local centre of excellence that other people can learn from...we do genuinely see this as something that government can get behind and will support"* (LW07).

*"it also has an ambition to change the way people think and that reaches beyond its locality" (LW06)*

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### **4.2.4 Activities**

#### a. A changing suite of activities

The reflexive approach described above is echoed in a changing suite of project activities, with building, vegetable growing, woodwork and cooking comprising a strong core. Again

there is the theme of both a tailored response and scope for individual input and creativity. In woodwork, for example, there are: *“some very skilled people in some areas, we have people with no skills at all, and two are a complete liability”* (LW03). The availability of individual tuition means perhaps: *“50% of my time working with an individual, explaining something, and then letting them loose”*, with trainees also able to bring their own ideas to the table (LW03). The idea of purposeful and creative activity was also felt to inculcate self-esteem: *“making something and giving for other people to share is ... a pride thing”* (LW13).

Opportunities have also been taken to diversify the project as opportunities present themselves, lending an element of organic growth to the offer. For example, a succession of students from degree programmes in Fine Arts and Sociology have been involved with the project since its early stages. One degree project led to a successful bid to the Arts Council for a socially engaged arts project (with LandWorks providing some match funding as well as conceptual and logistical support). This has provided an opportunity for trainees (and others) to work on an art installation. The resultant cob wall time line not only charts the development of the project but is now providing a starting point for a public visitor space with art as its focus.

#### b. Eating together:

Building on the notion of family described above, meals taken together have become an important part of the project. Again this has evolved. Initially, without cooking facilities, lunch was primarily collected from Schumacher College and right from the outset there was a notion of quality, care and ‘home’ cooking, which contrasted markedly with prison fare, together with evidence of engagement beyond the contractual:

*“We give them the bread straight out of the oven and then also it's interesting because when we renegotiated what we provide, I think we took out biscuits and salad but all the ladies said we've got to have it - got to have it we always put aside some cookies and cake as well.”*(LW08)

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More recently, with the development of the project's vegetable garden, kitchen facilities, and volunteer and trainee involvement there has been a shift from bringing in soup, bread and salad to ingredients produced and cooked on site. The relationship with Schumacher has also evolved to include trade in kind (including salad crops, and the construction of shelving and a table).

What was described by one (LW10) as a ‘family lunch’ was an opportunity for new food experiences. This didn't necessarily mean unusual foods:

*“He'd never eaten salad before and we had salad and on it we had salad dressing and two of the guys said this is really nice and what is it?”* (LW09)

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Lunch was also seen to capture the communal spirit, providing (as with other activities) ‘space for talking’ as well as healthy eating (LW13) and an opportunity for the transmission of pro-social values:

*“- it's a civilised thing to do.”* (LW03) *“So it's saying it's important without putting any pressure on behaviour and certain constraints.”* (LW02)

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However, as one respondent noted whilst, *"It should be something that brings people together ... it's not easy to do that ... food can also be divisive – a class marker, aspirational."* (LW11)

#### c. Activity as a route to communication

It was very noticeable that many interviewees felt project activities were a route to conversation, some of which could be therapeutic. The physical nature of the activity, the possibility of one-to-one conversations and the lack of direct engagement were all felt to be conducive to opening up:

*"he presses his button (...) his talk button and he goes and that's good for him because you can't do that in prison."* (LW10)

*"not just you know, learning how to use a welding machine but- or learning how to do something that might help them with a job, is actually helping re-establish themselves from within as it were."* (LW09)

*"it seems to take away that sort of surface level chatter in the mind and it goes on and you see people kind of settling into it and then actually quite serious in-depth conversations come out."* (LW02)

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Lunch has also become the focus of visitor activity (alongside occasional open days and special events). This was not often the place for in-depth conversations but could be an opportunity to develop self-confidence and raise awareness.

*"when they've got an outside person who's part of the judicial system or the support- social support system or whatever, you know, being able for them to talk to somebody like that you know, probably was quite beneficial in that they're telling a story about their experience and what it's like in prison to try and help somebody else influence things."* (LW09)

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#### d. Offering emotional support

Over time the need for emotional support has become increasingly apparent. For trainees this has meant the availability of counselling on site, access to restorative justice and, recently, the formalisation of bridging support. This means moving beyond an expectation that the Project Manager will always be on the end of the phone towards a structured system of mentoring in the community. This is partly recognition of the mental health needs of the trainees and their need for ongoing support beyond the confines of the project. It is also a recognition that, building on the family model, people wish to stay in contact and revisit the project so, as it grows, *"that side of it needs to be delegated out"* (LW10) and there needs to be a formal exit strategy and a network of support.

A counsellor now attends on a weekly basis with trainees offered a one hour session per fortnight. This explores family relationships which impact on reoffending, such as attachments, anger management and change. It seeks to embed change and also link into support with e.g. medication or mental health issues. This, like conversation over activities,

is not necessarily something that happens quickly. Trainees were described as arriving in 'prison mode', where the emphasis was on the ability to survive (LW05) and where it requires time to open up. LandWorks was described as:

*"an invitation for them to have a different relationship with authority." LW05*

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Such opportunities may also unlock hidden trauma and enable the assumption of personal responsibility.

*"think because Land Works treats them as people rather than prisoners or offenders, it's safe enough to own the 'bad part of themselves' because Land Works affirms the good part while knowing that they're someone who's committed a crime. So it doesn't jeopardise the attachment, I suppose, so it feels safe enough to sit and look at that." (LW05)*

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Importantly for the evaluation as well as the individual, this restorative process and the acknowledgement of areas *"where they do have choice"* (LW05), may also result in a seeming step-backwards in terms of self-confidence and progress as trainees come to terms with themselves.

The same counsellor also now offers regular supervision sessions for the project staff as a group, helping them developing a framework for understanding trainees' behaviour (LW05). This, together with staff's own identification of training needs around, for example, case management and teaching suggest again a responsive and evolving project.

#### **4.2.5 Outcomes for trainees**

Outcomes for trainees can be divided into two broad classes, technical or vocational skills and the softer skills that, amongst other things, are a vital prerequisite to employability.

##### **a. Vocational skills**

The project opened discussions with Weston College with a view to accrediting the training delivered on site but this is no longer being pursued. From an evaluation point of view this makes the measurement of qualifications achieved difficult but from a project point of view it was considered an ethical decision.

*"It's just an extra pressure they don't need, and if somebody's here for four months you're not going to be able to offer them any sort of accreditation or qualification" (LW03)*

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This was endorsed by an Advisory Board Member who similarly felt *"it was a bit formulaic actually to be honest"* (LW06).

Engagement in some activities, such as the timber roof for the cob wall timeline had also been limited because of the technical nature of the task but even here it was felt to have widened horizons and introduced possibilities (LW02). Instead, there is evidence of

developing a LandWorks 'brand', a suite of simple products, including vegetables, benches, bird boxes and wooden bowls that can be sold on site or through local outlets and which, in turn, serve to raise awareness of the project and increase the trainees' sense of achievement and self-esteem.

b. Soft skills: Building coping strategies

The number of references to personal growth and confidence was striking. Critically, these are the transferable skills and coping strategies that make people both work-ready and life-ready.

Some suggested this started with basic humanity and the subsequent effect this has on demeanour and self-confidence (LW16). This echoes the trainees' own feelings (see above) that there is value in simply being asked how you are (LW12) and shown that your normal (LW14).

*"I remember I was really struck by quite separately various other guys said to me this is the only place I've been where I'm not treated like scum." (LW09)*

Similarly it was seen to afford hope and offer space for reflection and laughter (LW13).

A second important outcome could be described as resilience or at least "*half a chance of resisting*" (LW14). This focuses on helping trainees feel more confident about themselves, confronting what they've done if they need to do that, taking responsibility for themselves and starting to plan (LW06). Confidence was seen as integral to resilience, as was self-respect, self-esteem, and a much noted ability to make eye-contact and maintain a conversation with a range of visitors from different walks of life.

*"it's not about being articulate, it's about an entire approach and head down and no eye contact." (LW15)*

Part of this was seen to relate to pride in their work: "*that I built that, so it's here and it's mine*" (LW15), part to trust and part to learning by demonstration (realising from project staff and volunteers that not everything works but that you can work out another way of approaching things; "*it actually changes the way that they approach tasks*" (LW02)). Collectively it was seen to represent emotional growth. The assumption of personal responsibility has already been mentioned above. This was allied to anger management and the process for some of re-establishing contact with family.

Previously, many had:

*"Never had the glue necessary to put themselves together" (LW14)*

A third outcome under this head is employability, the set of characteristics that are vital in any reference, whether for work or accommodation. As one interviewee pointed out:

*"we learned to trust him, good time keeper, good hard worker, enthusiastic, good team player, those are going to be the important things". (LW04)*

Team-work and co-operation were central to this.

*“What struck me about LandWorks more than anything, you know be it in the polytunnels, be it in the um, the woodwork shop, they all operate together and that's amazing, it's like clearing up, you know, they do it as a team, wonderful.” (LW10)*

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Again the fact that the trainees:

*“do work of worth, that they do work that matters and that they can see the difference that it makes” (LW06)*

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was seen to be important as was the fact that often it either services the project or helps support it financially.

#### **4.2.6. Outcomes for the wider community**

The terms of the evaluation focus primarily on outcomes for trainees. The project also, however, has a role in changing opinion and raising awareness. This has the potential, indirectly to change outcomes for trainees, promoting better understanding of the criminal justice system and individual experience of offending.

In future years the evaluation needs to be able to interrogate supporter records, the nature of the volunteer base and attendance at open days, for example, in order to understand better the reach of the project and the nature of community engagement. Supporters interviewed suggested that they had become *“more educated about what happens to people in prison”* (LW09)

*“These are people whose experiences are completely outside my own” (LW11)*

*“my understanding and knowledge has been deepened a lot.” (LW08)*

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But this appears largely to be restricted to a core active group and perhaps a community of place, focusing on the Dartington estate. It was notable that supporters had not only encountered negative attitudes from friends but also from colleagues in related professions such as the police force.

*“Well the initial response of 95% is oh my goodness me I couldn't do that and what are they like, as though they've got two heads.” (LW10)*

*“It's almost like you're working on the dark side, you've gone over to the other side.” (LW16)*

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Activities that help in raising awareness and changing attitudes appear to be the fortnightly newsletters which comment on project progress and the criminal justice system and serve to humanise the trainees by telling their stories. The project runs a series of events such as invitations to lunch, fund-raising dinners and open days, which have been supported by high



profile visitors such as the Chief Inspector of Prisons, gaining positive publicity. A presence on national television, at national award ceremonies, regional conferences and talks to local organisations help, as do educational placements. It also has a small roadside presence on the DHT estate courtesy of its market stall. Supporters tend to speak for the project:

*“and feel able to challenge received opinions: in some small insignificant way, the fact that I feel I’m a- I feel I’m a sort of advocate for the project with people” (LW09)*

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There is a felt need, however, to broaden the appeal to the wider community (LW15) and a recognition that more work needs to be done:

*“there are probably very few people at work even know that we’re...that we have this arrangement with LandWorks” (LW11)*

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Efforts to introduce colleagues, particularly more senior colleagues to the project have not always been successful and even some ambassadors suggest they could have a stronger sense of engagement and target help better if they were more aware of case histories and destinations (LW12). There is also a sense, in part credit to the project but in part inimical to changing attitudes, that the trainees are atypical offenders:

*“I don’t how standard your LandWorks offenders are compared with all offenders. It’s pretty gentle, so we’re not dealing with any people who might be considered particularly... dangerous.” (LW15)*

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#### **4.2.7. Further developments/identified needs**

Interviewees identified a number of ongoing challenges for the project. A first is fundraising. The project has two years of ‘absolute clarity’ as to where the money’s coming from courtesy of the Big Lottery but “we need already to be working with a list – well certainly the National Lottery and a list of currently 36 other Trusts that may well support us” (LW07). Then the challenges become operational. This includes not only running the business properly and ensuring proper succession but a need for accommodation, employment and (an emerging need) support with literacy.

*“I saw that the most important thing for somebody leaving prison was to have somewhere to live and to have a job.” (LW09)*

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There is a recognised need for local accommodation, with some trainees moving on from prison ending up living in an annexe to the Project Manager’s house as a staging post to secure accommodation. Accommodation within DHT had been mooted but it is now suggested that a house in a more urban area rather than on site (LW04), might be more appropriate and perhaps form the locus for another set of partnerships, fund-raising activity and skills (with trainees potentially helping build or renovate).

*"Have had to develop strategies for accommodation and housing as [they were] insurmountable ... the only way to deal with them was to embrace them."(LW06)*

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There is also a need for a wider range of employment opportunities (LW03, LW06):

*"it hasn't grasped people's imagination in the way that I thought it might do."*  
*(LW11)*

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And again it has been recognised that local employers too may require support from the project if they are to countenance taking on trainees. They probably need a similar organisational or managerial ethos (an *"open-minded approach"* (LW15)) and perhaps a buddy or mentoring scheme of their own:

*– "there's a will to help but it requires much more than most employers are ever going to....'You've got to make it easy for them – which is what [Project Manager] is doing really.... We'd never seek to try and work directly with someone from Channing's Wood. I would always want to do it through LandWorks." (LW11)*

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#### **4.3 Critique/Areas for development**

From a theory of change perspective one can see how the process described *can* create self-esteem, confidence and personal skills. This in turn should increase employability and the development of coping strategies, facilitate the re-establishment of social contact with family and the establishment of a pro-social support network. This then offers possibilities for improved mental health and the ability to break cycles of re-offending. This progression is harder to maintain once trainees return to the community as they typically have more issues to deal with at the same time as the support structure diminishes and becomes more distant. The current core for example comprises 5 ROTLS and 5 from the community none of whom had been seen at the project in the week we conducted the log frame training (see 6 below). The move to mentoring provides one bridge (three of the community based trainees for example were described as being in pretty constant contact) but accommodation and financial security remain particular challenges.

There is a sense that the project may represent a somewhat protected microcosm, albeit one that seeks to shelter and nurture. Attitudes towards ex-offenders are not always this positive, as stakeholders' responses reveal, and whilst the reflexive nature of LandWorks responds well both to individual needs and to opportunities for diversification and consolidation, it may sit less easily with the demands of the workplace and attitudes of society as a whole, emphasising that for some this can only ever be part of a longer pathway to resettlement. Indeed, one respondent suggested that trainees needed more opportunities beyond the projects bounds, offering greater exposure to people who are *"able to transmit and portray a law-abiding lifestyle"* (LW01).

From an evaluative perspective the organic nature of the project poses problems because whilst its strength is its ability to flex and flux, this means activities and outputs change and shift. The fact that the project is strongly driven by the Project Manager lends structure and continuity of vision but also means that the project is only beginning to evolve into a learning organisation, where procedures are clearly visible and embedded and could be extracted in the form of a good practice model.

*"I think if you didn't have [Project Manager] running it you'd have to have a way of ensuring that people are learning skills in a managed and organised way and I'm very conscious that there are things that we to the outside will look very unstructured about because actually [Project Manager] is very structured about them. But if he left you wouldn't necessarily just continue like that, you might feel you had to put the structure in which you could then take away later."* (LW06)

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Another respondent similarly highlighted a wish for more financial information:

*"You know how many students go through, what it costs, that sort of thing because at the moment you have somebody who's really engaged either whether it might be somebody who might provide you with some substantial funds rather than 50 quid for some pots and pans they are going to ask you those questions."* (LW15)

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A detailed consideration of the Project Manager's daily log, the fortnightly newsletter and project documentation relating, for example, to the meetings of the new Trustees, the Project Handbook (which is now subject to regular review), protocols and bids for funding across the next two years will help chart how the project evolves and learning is embedded and made the subject of protocol.

The Project Manager has been a key project informant based on informal set-up meetings, open days and the log-training (see 6 below) but it is imperative that he is interviewed in Year 2.

## 5. Observation at LandWorks events

### 5.1 Events attended:

As part of the evaluation, team members have observed routine elements (such as communal lunches), specific activities (such as the cob-time line conducted (primarily) with support from the Arts Council) and landmark occasions (such as open days and Christmas lunches). In addition, one member of the evaluation team has held a post-doctoral fellowship from the SHI Mildred Blaxter Foundation, enabling more regular observation and interaction, focusing particularly on the role of food-based activities.

The supporters event attended on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2015, for example, was the third such annual event (the first having been the launch in September 2013), with numbers having increased annually (from 101 to 137). The Christmas Lunch has also established itself as an annual event, with numbers again having risen from 18 in year one to 29 in year 3, aided not least by the ability to cook on site and to host the event now in the Big Lottery building.

### 5.2 Emergent themes

LandWorks is successful in achieving a good attendance at supporters' events, mostly comprising those whom they class as supporters (an umbrella title for anyone who shows interest in a positive way) but also including advisory board members, staff, trainees, graduates and stakeholders. At the September 2015 event, for example, the 37 stakeholders in attendance included: representatives of the criminal justice system (TurnAround; HMP Channings Wood; representatives from Working Links (DDC Community Rehabilitation Company, Catch 22, Police), local government and higher education.

As in previous years there was also a high profile guest speaker (on this occasion Juliet Lyon from the Prison Reform Trust, in the previous year Nick Hardwick, the then Chief Inspector of Prisons (now a LandWorks Ambassador). This, together with the numbers attending is important both in enhancing the projects status and credibility (critical to recruitment, partnership working and financial security) and in raising awareness of the resettlement agenda.

The emergence of an annual Christmas Lunch is similarly symbolic in suggesting continuity, permanence and cause for celebration. Importantly, like the supporters' event it also offers a chance not only for invited stakeholders and volunteers to join trainees and staff but also for graduates to return to the project. 5 of the 29 attendees this year were previous trainees.

In contrast to such special events, a working day at LandWorks was developed to reflect an ordinary working day, with breaks for coffee, lunch and tea. This began with contributions of soup, bread and biscuits from *Schumacher College* at lunchtimes, alongside 'extras' from visitors. Lunchtimes then quickly became a useful means of introducing potential stakeholders, volunteers, employers and funders to the project and the trainees. Once a makeshift kitchen was built on site it was possible to cook meals and cooking food on site then developed into another opportunity for one-to-one working with the trainees, led by a varied and wide range of staff and volunteers. Preparing and cooking food together is now an established activity at LandWorks (see 4.2.4 above), with some (not all) of the trainees admitting that this is the first time they have ever cooked anything.

There is a strict timetable to these lunchtime interactions, reflecting project ethos, activities and the requirements of the trainees, with visitors for lunch booked in (currently several months ahead). On Mondays Schumacher continue to provide soup and bread for lunch. This is a 'strictly no visitors at lunchtime day', as the trainees readjust to coming out to the site after a weekend in prison, so it is just staff and trainees. In contrast, visitors can be booked in on Tuesdays and Wednesdays when trainees cook lunch on site one-to-one with a volunteer. On Thursdays in term time, Plymouth Fine-Art students visit the site and eat lunch with everyone, again cooked by a trainee and volunteer. Friday is a cooked breakfast for the trainees and staff, so lunch is usually cobbled together with leftovers from the week, again there are not usually visitors for lunch on Fridays.

Following a reforming rehabilitation agenda, visitors for lunch have become a crucial element in transforming social attitudes and challenging prejudices (from both sides), as one LandWorks graduate said:

*"Though it did sometimes feel a bit awkward especially when you're sort of sat next to police officers and stuff like that and I'm thinking well we've sort of been enemies for the last 10 years, not in the sense like we meant any general harm to each other, but in the same sense you were on one side of the fence and I was on the other..." (LW19)*

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It is obvious that not all trainees are equally 'at home' at such events but attendance to detail (for example 'closed' lunches on Mondays and Fridays, T-shirts that blur the distinction between trainees, staff and key volunteers, food as an ever-present focus for conversation and consideration to seating arrangements) make it easier.

### **5.3 Critique/Areas for development**

Commensality, the act of eating and drinking at the same table, is a fundamental social activity. It is seen as important in creating and cementing relationships. It also sets boundaries, including or excluding people according to a set of criteria defined by the society (Kerner et al (eds), 2015. Parsons work examining the role of eating together at LandWorks will provide a very useful insight into this process for the second evaluation report. She has also gained funding for charting the development of social and cultural capital through photographic e-narratives. This participatory action research will again work with trainees at LandWorks and provide further opportunities to observe and interact with trainees, their families and other stakeholders (such as project staff, contributing organisations, volunteers, local employers) not open to the evaluation team as a whole with their limited resources.

## **6. Contextualisation**

### **6.1 The Log frame approach**

A log frame is a tool to help projects explore where they want to go, what steps they need to take to get there and what progress they are making towards that end. This readily accessible but flexible record should help both LandWorks and the evaluation team see the links between its activities and its overall aim and assess their relative contribution. Project staff were provided with a log frame for completion, together with brief explanatory notes and a half-day meeting was then held at LandWorks in February (with 8 attendees from LandWorks and the Evaluation team) to discuss the framework, populate it, secure a common understanding and identify any gaps or conflicts.

The four rows of the log frame provided (Figure \*) move from long- to short-term objectives, describing respectively: the project's goal (i.e. long-term aim), outcomes (or objectives), outputs (the specific results the project will generate) and activities (the tasks that need to be done in order for the output to be achieved). It is populated by starting with the project goals and working backwards to what need to be done to get there.

The four columns then capture the way this will be achieved and measured. The first is a narrative summary (explaining the objectives), the second lists the indicators (how achievements will be measured), the third describes appropriate sources of information and the fourth the risks and assumptions (the factors which may (positively or negatively) influence project progress (including events beyond the project manager's control). There should be a basic logic, so if the described activities are undertaken and the assumptions hold true, then the intended outputs will be created (similarly if the outputs are delivered (and the assumptions hold true), then the outcomes will be achieved, whilst if the outcomes are achieved (and the assumptions again hold true), then the intervention will have contributed to the goal (adapted from DFID 2011). It should also provide a checklist so, for example, LandWorks can check whether it has the necessary activities in place to support each of its objectives. If reviewed on a regular basis it will help manage activities, inform plans and assess progress.

### **6.2 From long-term to short-term objectives**

#### **6.2.1 Project aim**

It was obvious from the outset that there was a strong sense of ownership, expressed in terms of 'we do this' and 'our project'. This was aided by a small team that communicates frequently. There was ready agreement on the overall aim of the project:

- To provide a supported route (for prisoners and men on licence) back into the community and employment.

The agreed form of words, which is LandWorks' strapline objective' for funders, is contained in project documentation including the Project Handbook.

### 6.2.2 Objectives:

The objectives have evolved since inception. Nine are captured in the project handbook but four broad objectives were highlighted in the meeting; these were to:

1. Reduce re-offending;
2. Change attitudes (towards offenders);
3. Change behaviour (captured in the handbook in part by three objectives which together encompass the development of transferable employment skills, life skills, health and wellbeing, and the encouragement of personal responsibility) and;
4. Promote social inclusion (based on self-worth and confidence).

In terms of changing behaviour, there was a suggestion that the project does *'far more enabling than we do training these days'* (LW19). These softer skills have emerged as a particularly important outcome but weren't felt to be delivered in the form of specific activities, rather by learning by demonstration, drip-feeding messages around social behaviour and *'encouraging and praising - lots of thankyou's'* (LW18). There was no prescribed definition of acceptable norms (LW19). The Handbook now describes how staff and volunteers should behave with the trainees and where boundaries should be drawn (there having been incidents in the past when different beliefs as to how the groups should interact socially surfaced) but there was no social code of conduct as such. Staff were, however, considered to be *'broadly on the same page I think'* (LW19) suggesting an emerging LandWorks' value system and ethos, fostered by what was described as a 'novel approach' to recruitment (LW03), relying often on personal networks.

Further discussion showed that activities (see also 4.2.4 – c) varied in their provision of opportunities for meeting a range of people, encouraging reflection and allowing in-depth conversations. So, it was suggested, working with your hands might be particularly conducive to talking, whether cooking, gardening, or working on the cob wall, *'doing stuff with your hands seems to make people able to talk'* (LW03) but this might not be the same for woodwork. Another beneficial trait was identified as the ability to concentrate – and this might have a different distribution. Such variations need to be explored further. The objectives described above under the heading behavioural change (such as additional support with domestic and cooking skills) were also felt to require rewording. Disaggregation and clarification will enable the project to capture the benefits associated with individual elements, for example, the centrality of cooking and eating together.

The provision of meaningful training *is* still an element but this was felt to differ from the prescribed transferable employment skills favoured by the government, such as IT, CV writing and functional skills. Improving employability was suggested as an alternative objective, focusing as it does on characteristics such as being trustworthy, keeping good time and behaving, appropriately. A good reference rather than a certificate was seen as an appropriate outcome (LW03). The Project Manager felt that funding bodies would be interested in the reasons for the abandonment of accredited delivery whereas stakeholders such as the prison would have like it to have been maintained as it readily ticks a box. There was thus debate as to what were meaningful outcomes for the project as opposed to institutionally or politically desirable outcomes, hence the emphasis on a supported route back into employment and community.

Social inclusion was seen to be a difficult objective to define precisely (and part of the behavioural lexicon described above). From the descriptions given it appeared to be more a portrayal of human capital with individuals suggesting it was the product of the: mix of people and a welcoming, accepting, non-judgemental environment, which enabled character, trust and confidence to emerge and fostered the ability to communicate. This in turn helped develop self-esteem and encouraged the start of a new (non-criminal) identity. For social inclusion to occur, however, there needs to be transference beyond the project, with a logic model suggesting that trainees would not only need to have developed their own personal capital (hence potential to change attitudes in the community) but the community would also need to (as the second objective listed above suggests) be more aware and accepting of ex-offenders.

There is also a written objective in the handbook that focuses on *involving* the community. The potential for this too to raise awareness and change attitudes needs to be captured. Indeed, the notion of community needs to be explored further, and consideration given to communities of place, interest and communion. The role of family and friends is given considerable credence in the resettlement literature but not formalised yet in a project objective.

It was suggested that one earlier objective, the elimination of the need for host organisation subsidy and the need to keep best legal form in review could now be removed because this had been achieved (see 4.2.3). In terms of measuring progress it should remain visible as an objective that has been met (rather than being discounted). As part of this progress, however, ideas as to the business model have had to change. LandWorks had always accepted that the project would need to be reliant on grant aid and external funding. However, it had hoped this would follow a 60:40 (external: internal ) model, a figure of 80:20 (or perhaps 70:30) was now suggested if the flexible model and one to one working that was seen now to be central were not to be sacrificed to commercial pressures.

It was suggested that the projects' activities could be expressed in terms of functional capital. This would include increasing the trainees human capital (e.g. their employability, ability to reflect and take responsibility), their social capital (networks, community, family friendly) and cultural capital (e.g. arts) and should be defined by the LandWorks Project Team.

### **6.2.3 Activities**

The log frame needs to ensure each activity is documented, revised regularly and assessed for its contribution to the project outcomes and how it can best be measured. Each activity can have a number of different outcomes such as improving well-being, delivering skills, generating income or raising awareness. Regular revision is important to capture project evolution. For example, the specific training modules noted above, would have been usefully included in an earlier logic model. It then becomes obvious that this is an element that had been dropped between revisions and the rationale for so doing can be recorded. In this instance it was the lack of congruence between variations in trainee skills, time available to deliver vocational training and a meaningful qualification. Five bespoke modules were developed, including, woodworking, cooking and vegetable growing but it was felt:



*“embarrassing asking a 51 year old man to show you washing off a garden fork to tick a box so we could take photograph and offer a certificate.” (LW19)...*

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This was not felt to be what the project was about, which was described instead as *‘the passing on of knowledge and skills’*. This is captured by, for example, trainee and stakeholder interviews but the OASys system described above (2.3) offers further important opportunities for triangulation.

Other activities have been partly discussed in 4.2.4 above but need to be specifically itemised in the log frame. They include:

- Project planning, administration and documentation (e.g. daily planning meetings, trainee logs, monthly reviews, forward planning, project handbook, establishment of mentors, database maintenance and monitoring, signposting and maintaining contact with past trainees);
- Community engagement (site visits, dissemination of information, the market stall, lunches, maintenance of goodwill and support);
  - Generation of volunteers,
  - Generation of supporters,
  - Generation of Ambassadors;
- Communications (Blog/newsletter/website, presentations);
- Partnership Working (stakeholders, police, employers);
- Fundraising;
- Enterprise/marketing (generating revenue from goods produced);
- Advocacy, championing, awareness raising;
- Trainee activities:
  - Construction (including the building of the workshop);
  - Landscaping;
  - Wood Products (such as clocks, turned bowls, bird boxes and benches). Green woodworking will be introduced incorporating an additional team member;
  - Market gardening (vegetable/flower growing, eggs (caring for livestock), bees;
  - Cooking lunch and baking (producing food for one another and for sale);
- Socially-engaged art (including the cob wall (timeline) and tiles);
- Educational placements (art students on work experience for two semesters, introducing new skills and products (e.g. pizza oven) and providing another community to which they can take back messages);
- The Lunch/eating together (creating and cementing relationships);
- Support for transition/mentoring (supported living for those in the community e.g. help set up a bank account, NHS, jobcentre and for those in prison support in run up to release, accommodation, employment, relationships);
- Counselling
- Space for family and friends (a place to go, enduring elements (garden etc.).

Even beginning the simple process of listing activities helps raise awareness of the number of activities that comprise the project, the links between them and the time that each takes to discharge effectively.

#### **6.2.4 Measuring progress**

This is an underdeveloped aspect of the log frame and needs attention from both the project and the evaluation team. LandWorks has ambitions to become a project of excellence, able not only to help individuals but challenge policy. In order to do this it needs to enumerate both inputs and outputs otherwise there is a real danger of discounting ingredients (most particularly time and those elements that money can't buy such as reputation) that are essential to project success. For instance support work for trainees not on site is an important element and time spent texting may be as important to some as face to face contact (or to adopt a medical analogy hearing and treating may be as important as seeing and treating) and may extend way beyond project opening times.

Baselines are also an interesting concept to be further explored, with trainees potentially moving backwards from base as the project encourages them to open up and face their challenges. Fragmented pasts and chaotic lives mean that the expectation of progress has to be incremental and sensitive to small changes. It requires a consideration of, for example, the time between offences or the seriousness of the next offence committed rather than consideration of desistance only. This means variation from the original target measures.

With the database being established for project monitoring and existing databases increasingly capable of interrogation (such as the volunteer database), many elements are capable of transformation into usable indicators, able to describe volume and reach. The Project Manager's logs also contain a wealth of data (comparable to that contained in OASys) but require consideration to transform a qualitative record into one readily amenable to ongoing analysis. One important field, for example, is 'engaged but not at Quarry Field', which would allow a simple count of support given in the community.

#### **6.2.5 Risks and assumptions**

Similarly, attention needs to be given to the risks the project faces and the assumptions it makes (otherwise again important elements may be contained in a figurative black box, hidden from those seeking to replicate project elements). Important risks identified by the project team included the policies of HMP and Probation (including, for example, prison lockdown), national legislation (including attitudes towards the ROTL programme), funding, project stability (including staffing and resilience in the face of incidents with trainees, and contingency planning (so for example activities are not entirely weather dependent).

Perhaps chief amongst these is the maintenance of numbers. An interview with a member of the prison service illustrates how numbers are constrained. Offenders considered for ROTL first have to be on the resettlement wing, which contains only 34 out of circa 750 inmates. Access is thus based on security issues, disciplinary records and attitudinal and risk assessments. They also have to have made adequate progress with, or completed their sentence plan. They then have to be on the wing a month or two for observation purposes,

be approved for ROTL by probation, police and the victim, pass a risk assessment board and be at an appropriate time in their sentence relative to release date:

*"I'm aware that [Project Manager] doesn't want the numbers to drop too much it's us trying to get suitable people and once we identify them it's getting such a slow process to get them out." (LW16)*

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### **6.3 Critique/Areas for development**

There was a suggestion (LW18) that LandWorks was beginning to have the confidence to move away from rhetorical aims and buzz words (written to appeal to government and funding bodies such as making communities safer), and reflect instead what the project felt it was doing. In this sense it had moved on (in both thinking and understanding) since the Big Lottery outcomes were written. It is now important that the project maps out its future strategy in a yearly logic model that allows for an understanding of the perceived links between activities and outcomes and highlights areas where measurement is difficult or lacking. It must ensure changes are added on a regular basis without discounting targets that have been met.

## 7. Conclusion

### 7.1 Summary of findings

This preliminary evaluation report has charted the continued evolution of this small resettlement project. The concluding section to each chapter helps capture our findings to date. Many of LandWorks' strengths lie in its responsive nature and its ability to learn and flex. This is set here against an ongoing need to be strategic, to develop resilience and to become a learning organisation (See e.g. Glover, 2012). Ability to adapt is the product not just of the knowledge held by individuals but by the organisation as a whole. This institutionalisation of knowledge or development of a collective memory is created by, for example, appropriate record keeping, training and the development of protocols. It is also the product of a comprehensive approach to 'accounting' in its broadest sense, acknowledging all the inputs (hours delivered for example, rather than hours contracted, volunteer time, gifts in kind (practical, professional, instrumental, political) etc.) and outputs (negative as well as positive). The continued development of the project database and the adoption of a log frame approach will both be helpful in this respect.

The project has a strong supporter base and high profile both locally and nationally, this includes a number of influential visitors. It seeks to become a beacon project, an example of good practice which could not only be adapted and rolled out in other areas but also shape resettlement policy by demonstration. Small numbers and the challenges faced by the client base make it difficult to demonstrate change statistically. This first evaluation report suggests considerable qualitative support for change, this needs to be backed up by numbers (see below) and a more nuanced approach to, for example, community support.

There is also a continued need to focus on context. This would enable us to establish the degree to which our findings are context specific or transferable. The organisational literature suggests solutions often travel poorly and cannot be copied (Robery and Fulop, 2014). There is thus a need to identify the generic rather than the particular factors associated with success.

### 7.2 Areas to be developed

The small numbers involved and the range of potential outcomes means it is important to be able to compare the information captured by LandWorks' internal monitoring procedures with that generated by other partner agencies. This relates particularly to the availability of 'soft' outcomes. It is important that the population of the Excel database is accorded priority both to provide the project with routine monitoring information and to release data for evaluative purposes. This needs to be set against capture of data from the OASys system as a matter of urgency. Consideration needs to be given to the adoption of the Outcomes Star (in which both project and evaluative resources have been vested); this will provide a nationally validated baseline against which to measure trainees' progress as well as adding to the case management approach, tailored to individuals which is a feature of LandWorks development.

There is also a need to capture information vested in the project but not yet utilised for evaluation purposes or perhaps development. Chief amongst these is the information vested in the Project Manager's logs. Some of this has already been identified as key information for download into the project database but there is a need to establish what other areas are

capable of ready formalisation, quantification and analysis. Minutes of the Advisory Board, project documentation and applications for funding have been considered in this report but need to be subject routine examination and incorporation in order to capture content, process and change. At the moment one respondent, talking of a particular partnership suggested: *“And they won’t keep one bit of paper about it anywhere.”* (LW06)

With this process of triangulation, an emphasis on context and the availability of information across time, the project will be better able to demonstrate configurational and cumulative impact.

### **7.3 Focus for subsequent years**

The evaluation has limited resources for years 2 and 3. It is thus heavily reliant on the project generating information for analysis and facilitating access to key gatekeepers. As noted above, the project database, OASys and the Outcomes star are all areas we recommend as priorities for development and interrogation in Year 2, along with an ability to incorporate qualitative information from the commensality and e-narratives/social capital report. The concepts of human, social and cultural capital appear appropriate constructs around which to develop project-specific outcome measures for future years.

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